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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3707th meeting of the Security Council, held on 22 October 1996 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, of 10 October 1996 (S/1996/843). It has also taken note of the letter from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the President of the Security Council of 8 October 1996 (S/1996/835).

"The Security Council notes with deep concern that no significant progress has yet been achieved towards a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, including on the political status of Abkhazia, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for an active role of the United Nations, with the assistance of the Russian Federation as facilitator, aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement. In the context of the recent visit to the region of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the Council requests the Secretary-General to undertake further efforts and make proposals to reinvigorate the stalled peace process.

"The Security Council stresses that the primary responsibility for achieving such reinvigoration of the peace process rests upon the parties themselves and calls on them, in particular the Abkhaz side, to resume discussions and to reach substantive progress in the negotiations.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned by the deterioration of the situation in the Gali region and its negative impact on the ability of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to meet its mandated tasks. The Council condemns mine-laying and other threats referred to in the Secretary-General's report against UNOMIG and the Collective

Peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS peace-keeping force). The Council calls on both parties to take all the necessary steps to prevent all such acts.

"The Security Council calls on both parties to respect the Moscow agreement of 14 May 1994 on a Cease-Fire and Separation of Forces (S/1994/583, annex I) and expresses its concern at the violations referred to in the Secretary-General's report, in particular the serious violations which recently occurred in the restricted weapons zone.

"The Security Council stresses that the international community's ability to assist depends on the full cooperation of the parties, especially the fulfilment of their obligations regarding the safety and freedom of movement of international personnel.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned at the announcement made by the Abkhaz side that so-called parliamentary elections would be held on 23 November 1996. The holding of such elections would only be possible after the determination through negotiations of the political status of Abkhazia respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders, within the framework of a comprehensive political settlement, and with the guaranteed possibility of full participation for all refugees and displaced persons. The Council notes that conditions for holding such elections are not met at present. It calls on the Abkhaz side to call off these elections and further calls on both sides to refrain from any action that could heighten tension.

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the continued obstruction of the return of the refugees and displaced persons by the Abkhaz authorities, which is totally unacceptable.

"The Security Council welcomes the good cooperation between UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force and their efforts to promote stabilization of the situation in the zone of conflict.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to keep it closely informed of the situation."

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3708th meeting of the Security Council, held on 1 November 1996, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Great Lakes region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council is gravely concerned at the deteriorating situation in the Great Lakes region, in particular eastern Zaire, and at the effect which the continued fighting is having on the inhabitants of the region and condemns all acts of violence. It underlines the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated response by the international community to prevent any further escalation of the crisis there.

"The Security Council calls for an immediate ceasefire and a complete cessation of all fighting in the region. The Council calls on all States to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring States in accordance with their obligations under the United Nations Charter. In this connection, it urges all parties to refrain from the use of force as well as cross-border incursions and to engage in a process of negotiation.

"The Security Council, in the light of the letters of the Secretary-General to the President of the Council (S/1996/875 and S/1996/878), and the information received from the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights regarding the situation in eastern Zaire, is particularly concerned at the humanitarian situation and the resulting large-scale movements of refugees and displaced persons. It fully supports the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and humanitarian agencies to alleviate the suffering. It calls on all parties in the region to allow humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance to those in need and to ensure the safety of all refugees as well as the security and freedom of movement of all international humanitarian personnel. It underlines the urgent need for the orderly voluntary repatriation and resettlement of refugees, and the return of displaced persons, which are crucial elements for the stability of the region.

"The Security Council agrees with the Secretary-General that the situation in eastern Zaire constitutes a serious threat to the stability of the Great Lakes region. It is convinced that the complex problems at issue can only be resolved through early and substantive dialogue. The Council urges the Governments of the region to pursue such a dialogue without further delay in order to defuse the tension. The Council calls upon all States in the region to create the conditions necessary for the speedy and peaceful resolution of the conflict, and to desist from any acts that may further exacerbate the situation. In this context, the Council welcomes all regional efforts aimed at defusing tension in the region, in particular the announcement of the meeting of regional leaders scheduled for 5 November 1996 in Nairobi, Kenya.

"The Security Council fully supports the initiative of the Secretary-General to dispatch to the Great Lakes region a Special Envoy to consult with all concerned in order to establish the facts relating to the present conflict; to develop as a matter of urgency a plan to defuse tension and establish a ceasefire; to promote a process of negotiation; and to submit advice on the mandate to be given to a United Nations Special Representative including on the size and structure of a United Nations political presence which, in consultation with the Governments and parties concerned, will be established in the Great Lakes region. The Council also considers that the Special Envoy should be provided with adequate staff and logistic resources in order to carry out his mission. The Council also expresses the hope that the mediation efforts of the Organization of African Unity and the European Union will complement those of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. The Council calls upon all Governments and parties concerned to cooperate fully with the mission of the Special Envoy, and to contribute to the search for a comprehensive solution to the problems facing the people of the Great Lakes region. Given the urgency of the situation, the Council expresses the hope that the Special Envoy will travel as soon as possible to the region and provide early information on the situation there.

"The Security Council reiterates that the present situation in eastern Zaire underlines the need to organize a conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. To this end, it calls on the Secretary-General to ask his Special Envoy to promote the convening and to encourage the adequate preparation of such a conference on an urgent basis.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."